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Fisk. Sermon, May 27, 1829 . 1829

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# SERMON

DELIVERED BEFORE

HIS EXCELLENCY LEVI LINCOLN,

GOVERNOR,

HIS HONOR THOMAS L. WINTHROP,

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR,

THE HON. COUNCIL, THE SENATE, AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,

ON THE DAY OF

GENERAL ELECTION,

MAY 27, 1829.

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BY WILLBUR FISK, A. M.

Principal of the Wesleyan Academy, Wilbraham.

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**Boston :**

TRUE AND GREENE, STATE PRINTERS.

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1829.

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**Commonwealth of Massachusetts.**

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IN SENATE, MAY 28TH, 1829.

*Ordered*, That Messrs. TRAIN and LEWIS be a Committee to wait upon the REV. WILLBUR FISK, to present him the thanks of the Senate for his Sermon delivered yesterday before his Excellency the Governor, the Honourable Council, and both branches of the Legislature, and request a copy for the press.

Attest,

PAUL WILLARD, *Clerk*.

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IN SENATE, JUNE 10TH, 1829.

*Ordered*, That the Clerk be directed to procure the additional number of one thousand copies of the REV. WILLBUR FISK's Election Sermon, for the use of the Members of the Legislature.

Attest,

PAUL WILLARD, *Clerk*.

## SERMON.

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I. PETER: 4, 7.

BUT THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND; BE YE THEREFORE SOBER,  
AND WATCH UNTO PRAYER.

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The circumstances of the public religious teacher are unlike those of most public speakers. These, in most cases, have their subjects specifically marked, and their topics of discourse distinctly proposed. Not so the gospel minister. He has, indeed, but one object in view,—the moral and religious improvement of his hearers; but to accomplish this object he may draw his materials from heaven, earth and hell. Like the great apostle to the gentiles, he determines to know but *one thing* among the people—“Jesus Christ and him crucified,”—but around this proposition as a common nucleus, gather all the truths of revealed religion. This contains in itself, directly or impliedly, all the doctrines and precepts, the admonitions and promises of the Bible. In one discourse, however, but a small portion of this vast field can be brought into view. Hence the necessity of selecting such a portion as is best adapted to the circumstances of the audience addressed. The question then arises,—What subject is best suited to this audience? To answer this question satisfactorily, we must enquire what is the design of a religious discourse and devotional exercises, on an occasion like this? Is it a mere indication that the christian religion is recognized in the principles of our government,



and by the great body of our citizens, and therefore, when we induct men into the principal offices of the State, God and his religion must have a passing compliment? If this were all, then the shorter this compliment, the better: and the subject selected, and the time occupied, should be such as would least divert attention from the civic honors and ceremonies of the day. But this is not all—the reason of these religious exercises is founded in the relation of man to God—in his known proneness to forget God, and in the evident need of religious influence and divine aid in the responsible duties of administering civil government. Hence the object should be to impress deeply upon the memory and upon the heart, the principles and obligations of our holy religion.—While the flag of our country is waving in the breeze, and the rush and the acclamations of thousands give interest and animation to the occasion, it is very proper that the banner of the cross should also be unfurled, the voice of the multitude be hushed, and the civil ceremonies suspended, that we may gather around the altar of God to acknowledge, “Thou God seest us,” to learn our dependence, and to become deeply impressed with our high responsibility to the court of Heaven. It is for this end that your speaker claims the attention of this audience—claims it not that he, or those of his profession, may share in the political honors of the republic, but that the civil officers of the Commonwealth may share in the wholesome instructions and binding motives of the gospel he preaches. The more common course pursued on such occasions is, to point out the duties and qualifications of rulers, and to discant on the blessings of a good

government, and the freedom and prosperity of our public institutions. These are appropriate, but they are already better understood than the means by which they are secured, or the motives by which they are enforced. That preaching which is merely didactic, under such circumstances as the present, and before men who know their duty so well, if it should not be actually tedious and irksome, promises little profit. If this audience should be told that rulers must be good men, "fearing God and hating covetousness," that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people," that in proportion as men are high in office, their example and influence will be more extensively felt, and that therefore they owe it to their country and their God to be upright and virtuous,—all this would be important truth, but it might not, under existing circumstances, be the most profitable. To cure the evils of life, and to promote righteousness among men, the work should be commenced at the proper place, and be enforced by proper motives. The religion of the Bible aims at the inner man, and wars with the elements of moral evil in the heart, where alone they can be successfully combatted. And to do this effectually, it arrays the transient character of earth and earthly objects, in striking contrast with the eternal and immutable realities of the world to come. "For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." This discipline of the inner man, and these more than earthly reasons that enforce it, are both brought into view in the text,—"*Be ye sober and watch unto prayer,*" for "*the end of all things is at hand.*"

We first notice the duty enjoined. It must be acknowledged that an attention to the outward conduct is important, because it is by this that we fulfil the various duties which grow out of the relations we stand in to each other. God alone, directly and clearly reads the heart, and the moral evils there concealed are offensive only to him. If, therefore, there were no connection between the heart and the life, with the sinfulness of the former, men, in their various relations to each other, would have nothing to do. But since it is from "the abundance of the *heart* that the mouth speaketh," and since "out of the *heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies," it is evident that it is with the heart principally we have to do—especially when we would restrain vice or promote virtue. As teachers of morality and religion, we should have the same regard to the outward conduct that physicians have to symptoms. These show the kind and the malignity of the disorder, but are not the disorder itself. The remedy therefore is to be applied, not to the symptoms, but to the disease. Cure the latter, and the former will cease of course. But you cannot cure the disease by an application of the remedy to the symptoms. It is for this reason that the requirements of the divine law are truth in the inward parts, and gospel remedies strike at the very root of sin. To regulate the life, therefore, and to qualify the man for all the duties of life, there must be a moulding of the *heart*, a fashioning of the *soul* to *sobriety*, *circumspection* and *devotion*. And this is what is enjoined in the text. Indeed the requirements of the text imply

the whole of a religious character ; and very distinctively mark the difference between *him that serveth God*, and *him that serveth Him not* ; for they have respect unto the judgment and the affections, unto the temper of the mind and the exercises of the heart ; and inculcate a vigilant and an untiring energy, that guards against a corruption of the one, or an alienation of the other. He who is but slightly acquainted with his own heart, or has marked with any attention the prevailing character of man, knows well the proneness of the heart to become supremely attached to the world, and wholly engrossed with the concerns of time. Almost all the evils which cluster around the soul, or disparage the life, are engendered here. And he alone is cured of this idolatry of the heart, whose prudent mind puts a sober and judicious estimate upon the things of earth, and restrains the passions and appetites within temperate and reasonable bounds. But however well disciplined the soul may be ; however subdued the passions ; however sound the judgment, or regular the life, yet in this contagious and infectious world, the sober mind may become perverted, and therefore *watchfulness* is one of the leading characteristics of true religion. The spirit of irreligion is heedless of the errors, and reckless of the dangers, to which the soul is exposed—slothful and self-confident, it keeps no guard against the world, the flesh and satan. The spirit of true religion is the reverse of all this ; it is wary and guarded against temptation. Under its influence the heart is kept with all diligence,—every avenue to the soul is guarded, and every sense is awake to duty and to the coming of Christ.

The spirit of irreligion is the spirit of pride, of self-dependence and of forgetfulness of God. Humble adoration and sincere worship are not in accordance with the spirit of the world. It is said of Saul of Tarsus, by the Holy Spirit, to remove the doubts of one who justly suspected his character, "Behold he prayeth," as if this were enough to prove him a sincere christian. But had he never prayed before? In the forms of prayer he had doubtless often engaged. And so have many worldly men—and have even thought themselves devout, perhaps, while they had at heart the same kind of opposition to Jesus of Nazareth, with Saul of Tarsus. Never till he saw his heart and felt his sin, could it be truly said of Saul, Behold he prayeth. And so of all others. The spirit of prayer, therefore, very clearly designates the spirit of true religion. He who feels it has contrition for sin, gratitude for mercies received, adoration and humble veneration for the character of God, supplication for needed blessings, and submission of himself and all his interests into the hands of God.

From this concise view of the subject it appears, that the qualities and exercises of heart required in the text are the grand features and distinguishing marks of the truly pious. And such as they are at heart, such they will be in their outward walk. Hence we may understand the Apostle as saying—Be ye holy in heart and life, be ye the humble worshippers and faithful servants of the most high God, watching against sin and over your own hearts and lives with all caution and diligence, that ye may thereby secure a treasure and an inheritance beyond the bounds of time and of earth ; and

so much the more because time and all its interests, earth and all its concerns, are coming to a speedy end.

Our next object will be to show how the consideration that the end of all things is at hand, is suited under all circumstances, to make the mind *sober, watchful and prayerful*.

On the subject of the dissolution of the world there is doubtless much skepticism in the minds of many. It is still asked, "Where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning." That the earth has never been dissolved is no argument, however, that it never will be. But rather because we are told by the word of God it will be, and as yet it never has been, it is therefore to be expected. And even the changes that have taken place are strong indications that there may be other great changes in the present constitution of things. We are informed in sacred history, and this is corroborated by ancient tradition and by the present state of the earth, that this world as it once existed was overflowed by water and perished. And this is produced as analogical proof by the inspired author of our text that "the heavens and earth which are now, are kept in store reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." "For the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." Yea "all these things shall be dissolved." And it is not certain that the established laws of nature need be reversed to accomplish this dissolution. Astronomers tell us of comets which threaten at some future day to approach so near the earth as

finally to be attached to it with a force that may shatter it to its centre, and with a heat that may dry up its waters, melt down its mountains, and utterly consume it as the fire from heaven consumed the altar and sacrifice of Elijah. Philosophy teaches that a latent fire pervades all matter, which of itself, if liberated, would be sufficient to wrap this globe in one universal conflagration; as also of an electric fluid or ethereal fire that may be called into operation and made to "pass through the aqueous particles of the atmosphere and produce innumerable explosions, frequent, loud, confounding, and terrific beyond every comprehension, but that of God himself." How exactly does this answer the prophetic description of the Apostle: "The elements shall melt with fervent heat and the heavens shall pass away with a great noise." These elements now occasionally break out, as if impatient of restraint, and should they all or any one of them be once brought into general action, the work of dissolution is accomplished. But in whatever way the event is brought about, we are taught to expect it, and with it there are results and consequences that seriously affect the interests of the human family and demand our careful and solemn attention.

1. The sublimity and grandeur of this scene are of themselves suited to draw off the mind from earth and impress it with sentiments of sobriety and awe. The resurrection of the dead, the gathering of the nations, the rocking of the world and its conflagration, the explosions and intonations of the atmosphere, the warring and wild uproar of the elements, "the shout, the voice of the archangel and the trump of God," all unite to make this a scene of inconceivable sublimity. One single

feature in this grand exhibition will far exceed all the events and ceremonies, which in this world appear so imposing. What is the inauguration of a President or the coronation of an Emperor, compared with the coronation on that day of one of the least in the kingdom of Heaven? What is the mustering of armies, compared with the assembling of all the generations of men, both of the quick and the dead? What is the roar of cannon or the eruption of the volcano, compared with the shaking and melting down of this terraqueous globe? Man is susceptible of moral impressions, from the contemplation of grand and sublime objects. Whether this moral influence is direct or through the association of ideas, matters nothing to the present argument. The fact admitted, it follows, that the impression made and the moral effect produced, will correspond with the character of the object contemplated and the light in which it is viewed. Whatever, therefore, is imposing in earthly exhibitions is apt to dazzle the mind and captivate the heart. Hence we see sedate age and buoyant youth, the intelligent and the ignorant, rushing on to such scenes to see the gathering and hear the shouts and witness the ceremonies. And the more splendored they appear, the more the heart of the charmed beholder becomes attached to the earth as the seat of every thing interesting and desirable. All the sensations that are raised by these earthly scenes are earthly; they feed earthly affections; excite ambitious hopes and strengthen the whole train of worldly feelings. To counteract these and to call the soul away from earth, what is better suited than the consideration of the closing scene of time and the attending circumstances? How trifling



would the grand scenes of earth appear amidst those contemplations, that make the soul familiar with the coming of the King of kings in the clouds with power and great glory, the descending of the New Jerusalem from God out of heaven, the acclaim of the Heavenly Hosts, the confusion of dissolving elements and the glare of a burning world.

2. This leads to another view of the subject closely connected with the foregoing. It has been already assumed and no evidence need be adduced to prove the assumption, that the root of sin and that from which spring forth the various branches of a sinful life, is an inordinate attachment to this world. This attachment stands opposed to all holiness ; for "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him ; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." The strength of this love can only be rated by the force with which it impels the soul forward in its earthly pursuits. The objects presented seem so desirable, that the pursuer is not scrupulous about the means of obtaining them. Trifling deviations from rigid virtue are at first indulged ; afterwards, still greater departures, until crimes of the deepest dye are perpetrated. Are the honors and offices of the world presented as objects of pursuit ? What tricks of electioneering are resorted to ; what questionable strokes of policy, what time-serving, what misrepresentations. Envyings and strifes are produced ; and all this too among honorable men ! Is wealth the object of pursuit ? The man's haste to be rich destroys his innocency : and so of all the other unholy passions. And in vain will you

attempt to hedge in the soul, and prevent its breaking over due bounds to secure its object. So long as hope promises, and the crown glitters, the love of having and the desire of enjoying will urge their gratification, with an irresistible influence ; virtue fades, conscience is smothered, and all the moral feelings are blunted or perverted.

It gives us pleasure indeed to be able to state, that many men who are not under the immediate and controlling influence of heavenly affections, are nevertheless far from having arrived to the point of depravity just alluded to. But this makes nothing against the argument. The tendency is to this, and where worldly motives prevail, this will be the result. When a man's principles and conduct are guarded only by worldly motives, what guaranty have we that he will give due heed to the principles of moral integrity ? It may be considered as an axiom in morals, that undue and unholy attachments lead to undue and unholy means of gratification. When therefore the spirit and love of the world sway the mind, who can tell where the erring principles of the soul will be stayed ? "Every man when he is tempted is drawn away by his own lusts, and enticed ; then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin." Under this influence, the mind cannot be approached by the sober truths of the gospel, nor affected by the feelings of devotion, until these prospects are blasted, or their fancied brightness obscured. Here therefore, we see the need of the motives in the text ; and the connexion these motives have with the object to be gained. The object to be gained is purity of heart and purity of life. Against this the world opposes its influence. Its

honors dazzle, its riches allure, its pleasures invite, its prospects promise ; and however deceitful and unsubstantial all these are in fact, yet, by the magic of a sinful delusion, they appear to the mind apparelled in inexpressible loveliness. If the delusion remains unbroken, who can withstand it ? Vain is the attempt to fortify the mind and strengthen the moral powers of the soul. The power that draws the soul to earth is irresistible until the attractive influence is broken. And this can only be done by showing the man the unsubstantial and valueless character of the phanthom he is pursuing. He must be made to see and feel that “ the end of all these things is at hand ”—that we all do fade as a leaf, and the glory of man is as the grass that withereth and the flower that falleth off—yea, that nature herself is doomed to dissolution, and that the throne of man’s highest elevation is crumbling to dust. And when once the mind is impressed with these sentiments, the principal barrier to a sober, watchful and prayerful life will be removed, and the way will be prepared to admit the purifying influence of high and heavenly motives. Hence,

3. The consideration urged in the text is suited to lead the mind to moral purity, because closely connected with the dissolution of the world, is the consideration of the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. It seems abundantly to accord with all consistent ideas of the divine economy and with the scriptural account of the subject that when this earth shall be burned up, and the heavens which now are shall pass away with a great noise, there will be, as respects man, a new constitution of things. There shall be, we are told, “ new heavens and a new earth,” which shall

be emphatically and universally “a habitation of righteousness.” And there, saith an apostle, “will be the city of the New Jerusalem, and among the habitations of men shall be the tabernacle of God, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.” This description, than which nothing is more simple or more expressive, brings into view objects that are suited to arrest the attention and engage the affections when they are taken from this world. And this is all important. For it is essential to the soul that it love something, or be utterly miserable. Its guilt therefore is not that it *loves*, but that it loves wrong objects. Of course the affections are not to be destroyed, but transferred. It accords therefore with sound philosophy, that when the affections are to be separated from earthly objects, they are to be invited to higher and nobler attachments. And this is precisely the philosophy of the Bible. The same inspired prediction which blots out one world, creates another, and the same authority which prohibits placing affections on things on the earth, directs to place them on things above. If earthly crowns are fading, nevertheless there is a crown that fadeth not : though riches make to themselves wings and fly away, yet there are durable riches and an incorruptible inheritance ; and though the pleasures of life are deceitful and transient, yet at God’s right hand are pleasures forevermore. Thus at the very time the soul is called off from objects in their nature defiling, it is brought into connection with those which are purifying. For, while on the one hand it is impossible for the heart

to be attached to this earth supremely, without cherishing pride and vain ambition, and all that is “earthly, sensual and devilish,” so when by a view of the certain and speedy destruction of this mundane system, the soul is induced to turn its attention and fix its affections on things which are above, the influence is most salutary;—it draws around the heart every thing virtuous and noble, and the soul, by its association with whatsoever things are true, pure, lovely and of good report, is changed into the same image, and becomes imbued with that wisdom which is from above, “which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”

This connection of the soul with such elevating and purifying associations must also have a most salutary influence upon the *life*; not only because, as we have seen, these associations, in their very nature, tend to counteract that narrow selfishness so natural to the earthly mind, and to mould the soul into an expansive and heavenly benevolence, but also because all the motives to encroach upon the rights of others are hereby removed, and every inducement to do good to our fellow men is brought into view. For in the objects of affection and pursuit here presented, there are no conflicting interests, and therefore no occasion for competition. The elevation of one, is no cause of the failure of another,—hence there is no ground for envying, reviling and revenge. There are honors, riches, pleasures, mansions, crowns and thrones for all; and the more virtuous and beneficent they are, the more secure the reward, and the richer the inheritance. These thoughts, however,

are closely connected with another consideration which deserves a more distinct and particular notice.

4. The text implies that at, and after, the destruction of the world, man will have a conscious state of being, and a state too, on which his present character and conduct will have a decisive influence. Otherwise the apostle's argument would be futile and childish. For why should he urge sobriety, circumspection and prayer, from the motive that all things were coming to an end, if the duties here enjoined had no bearing upon our future state? And the same may be asked of other passages. "Seeing" saith another text, "all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" And again, "Wherefore beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye be found of him in peace without spot and blameless." At that day, we are taught, the wicked shall perish; "for the heavens and the earth, which are now, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Yea, it is, when "the heavens and the earth flee away, so that there is found no place for them, that the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and shall be judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works." And this idea, so frequently presented in the Bible, is confirmed by reason and the fitness of things. Separate time from its connection with eternity, and it becomes an unmeaning point. What are all its relations and duties, its joys and sorrows, its hopes and fears! But join time with eternity, and connect them by those ties which grow out of responsibility and retribution, and every thing

appears consistent and rational. God himself has attached great importance to this earth and its inhabitants. He has displayed by its creation his eternal power and godhead. He has thrown up its mountains in majesty, and spread out its vallies in beauty, and fitted it up with wondrous accommodations for the residence of man. And he has attached additional importance to our existence here, by providing for our moral dicipline. To this end all his providences are directed, and all the revelations of his will. He has given a law to his creatures, and his concern for their obedience is manifested in all the encouragements and promises, the cautions and threatenings of the Bible; and especially in all the provisions of the gospel. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now why this preparation? why this dicipline? why this care and solicitude manifested for man in his present state of existence? We can account for it on no other principle than that much is depending upon this portion of existence, and much that is of vast moment to the soul, and much that will not be fully disclosed until that day when "the earth and all things that are therein shall be burned up." Then shall it be seen why heaven's King wept over the rebellious and incorrigible, and why heaven's hosts rejoice over repenting sinners. For then those "that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt; and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." Then shall the evidences of the

past be examined, and the destinies of the future be unfolded, and then shall it be clearly seen, why this life, short as it is, and why this world, in itself so unsubstantial and fading, should nevertheless have attached to them such a weight of importance, and draw around them such an eternity of interest.

It is evident, from the foregoing considerations, that this earth is only a theatre, on which the Almighty and the Allwise exercises his subjects awhile, to try their fidelity and test their love ; and that this life is only a period of moral discipline, preparatory to another and a more permanent state of being. Whenever, therefore, we are urged to a virtuous and holy life by the argument, that "the end of all things is at hand," we are expected to take into view the consequences to ourselves, connected with this event. How important is it, therefore, that we enquire seriously, where shall *we* be, and what *our* conditions amidst "the wreck of matter and the crush of worlds?" This inquiry the scriptures have answered, and answered too in a manner to give full force and influence to the foregoing argument. "For if God spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly," then indeed he "knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

Here is the grand lever of scripture motives ; and the fulcrum on which it rests is placed far beyond the range of time and the bounds of a dissolving earth. Here it *should* rest, and *thence* must be derived the power that moves it. For none but such a power can counteract



the gravitating influence of earth, and give to the affections a high and holy elevation.

It is on the ground of the close connection of our conduct here, with the moral consequences connected with the dissolution of the world, that it could in truth be said, when these words were first penned, and to all the generations since, "The end of all things is *at hand*." For although many generations have passed away since that period, and the end is not yet, still the relation between the termination of life and the end of the world is so intimate, that the consequences of the one are, in point of fact, the consequences of the other. Or more properly, the latter will be the period when the character, which has been forming in life and is finished at death, will be fully developed and adjudged. The evidences on which this trial shall proceed, and the decision be grounded, may have been sealed up for centuries, still as they are taken and reserved in special reference to that event, the mind is constantly cited to that period, as the one in which the character of each shall pass the test, and his destiny be fixed. And this character is soon to be finished; so that all that is interesting and momentous to any man, all that can effect his weal or woe, in relation to that or any future event, will, in a short time, be accomplished. Yea, it is probable, that, immediately upon the death of the body, the departed spirit enters into such a meditation of the past, and contemplation of the future, as will be preparatory to, and almost a participation of, the final decision.

So that in fact the circumstances which relate to that event, which render it greatly to be desired, or awfully to be dreaded, will, at death, crowd around the soul,

and infix their thrilling pleasures, or poignant pangs, with such certainty of anticipation, as to render the whole, not only in its preparatory process, but in its almost opening realities, already begun. Well, therefore, in relation to the moral consequences to the soul, may it be said to every successive generation, “The end of all things is *at hand*.”

And well may this subject be urged, to wean the soul from earth, and raise it to higher attachments and nobler pursuits. To believe and to feel these truths would be our salvation,—to doubt them is our ruin. The more, therefore, the pursuits of men are calculated to sensualize the mind, the more engrossing their cares, and the more winning and fascinating the events that pass around them, the more earnestly should it be proclaimed in their hearing, “*The end of all things is at hand*.” And perhaps there is no situation in which man can be placed, where the mind is more liable to be engrossed with something short of the realities of eternity, than amid the busy cares and flattering honors of public life. This proclamation, therefore, should be made in our legislative halls, in our courts of justice, and in our popular assemblies, until it shall have sobered all the levities, and chastened all the excesses, and humbled all the aspirings of this erring life.

To damp our earthly joys,  
 To increase our gracious fears,  
 Forever let the Archangel's voice  
 Be sounding in our ears.

Is it whispered that such thoughts may be intruded unseasonably upon the mind? We answer—No! never! never! What is designed to influence the whole life,

and indeed to have bearing upon a whole eternity, should be always present. If at one time more than another, some wish to forget it, this is the time when, and these are the persons to whom, this subject should be especially presented. And if there are any who read, in the dissolution of the world, the destruction of their joys, and the annihilation of their hopes, and to whom, therefore, this theme may be gloomy and unwelcome, such feelings clearly indicate that they, of all others, need to have it pressed upon them. For they are the ones whose hearts are not right with God. If their treasure were in heaven, and their hearts there, no such gloom would hang over this subject.

Neither should this subject be dispensed with, though some should be scepticle, and doubt the coming of such an event. So it has ever been with the world, in relation to the threatened judgments of God. He has given timely warning, but the transgressor has often doubted till he was ruined. God warned the inhabitants of the old world, before the deluge; he warned the inhabitants of Sodom and the cities of the plain, before their dreadful overthrow; he warned the Jews, before the destruction of Jerusalem; but all these warnings were disregarded as idle tales. *They ate, they drank, they married and were given in marriage, they bought and sold, planted and builded*, until the flood, the fire, and the enemy destroyed them all. One event remains! One awful and final catastrophe!—long predicted, often alluded to, and delayed only until the fullness of time shall come. But it will come, and will not tarry. “For the heavens and the earth shall perish, yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a ves-

ture shall God change them, and they shall be changed." But God endureth forever, and his word shall never fail. "He is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering towards our world, and not willing that any should perish." It is for this cause that he delayeth, and sendeth his word and his messengers, to warn the sons of men of their danger, and to hasten them to their duty. And shall *we* doubt and perish? Must our ruin be the only evidence that will convince us? Shall we, like those of old, *eat and drink, build and plant, buy and sell*? shall we seek honor and pleasure, wealth and office, thoughtless of the future, and reckless of our danger, until we see "our God in grandeur, and our world on fire?" O what is man! how slow in heart to believe, how dull in feeling, not to tremble at the threatened judgments of the Almighty! "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." Then would they become emulous of a crown that fadeth not, and of a throne that crumbleth not, and of pleasures at God's right hand forevermore.

But I am admonished that it is time to come to the accustomed congratulations of the occasion, and so conclude.

His Excellency the Governor, and the other officers and members of the Executive and Legislative Departments, will accept our cordial felicitations for the honors conferred on them by the free suffrages of an enlightened people. Of all offices in the world, those conferred thus, and under such circumstances, are the most desirable and the most flattering. We love and respect the rulers of our own choice, and we doubt not but such

rulers love and respect us. We are yours, and you are ours. Strong and endearing ties! Well may it be said of such, at least so far as the political interests of our country are concerned,—Happy rulers, over a happy people! But while I am permitted thus publicly to be the organ of these congratulations, you will suffer me, I doubt not, to present them in full view of the preceding subject, and of the need you have, for all the motives here furnished, to enable you, amidst the cares and honors of public life, to be sober, watchful and prayerful. For the more interesting and honorable your relations to society, the greater your danger of being too much engrossed by them. Faithfulness and diligence in the duties of your respective offices do indeed become you; nor are you required to be indifferent to the confidence, honors and affection of your fellow-citizens. Our fault is not that we feel an interest in the duties and concerns of time, but that this interest is not always regulated by a regard to the connection of time with eternity. Who would build the temple of his fame and the palace of his pleasures on the sand? Yet he builds thus who loves the world for its own sake. But if, through all the relations and duties of time, you feel and act with respect to the events of the *great day*, then will you fill up your respective spheres, with pleasure, with interest, and with integrity, and in the end it shall be said to each of you,—*Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*





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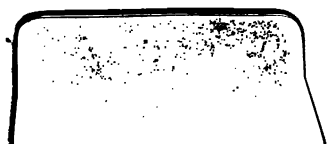
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